

COLLOQUY

Karen and I were saddened at the loss of Rex Gooch. He was a staunch logologist and his varied efforts will certainly be missed. He was well known for his word squares but I think I was more in awe of him when he strayed into areas other than squares. Perhaps squares have now reached their limit using English words and maybe Rex would have turned his powerful machines on giant squares with phrases allowed – not just words. We shall never know.

Darryl Francis reports that Gooch's daughter wants to find a new home for Rex's complete set of *Word Ways*. (There now are only about ten sets available from the publisher.) Darryl would like to find a new U.K. owner and invites suggestions from readers. It may be that this collection is already placed, but inquiries may be made to darrylfrancis@yahoo.co.uk.

Chris Cole has generously allowed our website www.wordways.com to reprint some of his long word lists. The site will be constantly updated by our able web specialist David Dillon. We will also reprint selected articles from the Journal, all of which will be copyrighted by the editor with all reprint rights granted to the author of the pieces. We no longer can accept individually copyrighted articles.

The winner of the "Eckler Enigma", chosen by our editorial board in a blind drawing is none other than Ross Eckler himself! His results appear in Answers and Solutions.

New subscriber Art Benjamin recalls a limerick. "I read it on a chalkboard at Carnegie Mellon University over 25 years ago, and it did not attribute an author. A goggle search seems to indicate that it has been unpublished."

First let me say that I'm cursed.
I'm a poet who gets time reversed.
Reversed time,
Gets who poet a I'm,
Cursed I'm that say me let first.

ANIL submits "Acrogram Windows" is a logological form I would challenge computer-literate readers to search for. (It will require both a large word list and a large literary database. Mike Keith?) What is the longest word or string of words that can be spelled out by consecutive first letters occurring in any published text (books, newspapers, etc.)? And, less likely, can any word or even phrase be found that actually bears some relationship, however, remote, to the text window (\pm its surrounds) producing it? I regret that I lack the competence and databases to do it myself.

Sol Golomb writes:

"The first issue of WORD WAYS under your editorship is a wonderful revelation. It will be a challenge to maintain such a high standard.

Three very minor quibbles: 1) On p. 39, Martin Gardner is alleged (it's no longer in quotes) to refer to the first three lines of T.S. Eliot's *Prufrock* as containing "the worst

metaphors”, but isn’t it actually a *simile*? [...*like* a patient...] 2) On page 28, the first eponym correctly states that the original *Abigail* was the wife of Nabal (Hebrew for *fool*!); but he conveniently died so she could marry David, which is why she is remembered. (It would be like identifying Bathsheba as the wife of Uriah and never mentioning David, who seems to have been fond of adding other men’s wives (or widows!) to his harem.) 3) In “It’s not all Greek”, pages 57 and 80, it lists F, J, Q, V, W, Y as “six English letters not in the Greek alphabet”. Two of these, F and Q are not in the *Attic* Greek alphabet, or the *Modern* Greek alphabet, but were in the *original* Greek alphabet, and were retained, even in classical Greece, for their numerical values: F (called “digamma” from its appearance) for 6, and Q (called “koppa”) for 90. The letters J and U were not separate letters in the Latin alphabet either, but became variants of I and V to indicate consonant –I and vowel –V respectively. Then W became yet another variant of U, V, and is called “double –V” in the other Germanic languages. Finally Y *looks like* the Greek upsilon, and is even called *i-grec* in French. I know that the context was: which English letters are not used to spell the names of the Greek letters; but it is these 5 letters (plus H, as in theta, phi, chi) that don’t begin the names of the Greek letters.”

Dana Richards seems to have found an error in Will Shortz’ New York Times Crossword Goofs in the February 2007 issue. On p. 75 you say “the line was said only in the SH books, never in film.” I assume you meant to say only in the film, never in the books. (It is somehow nice to see a goof on a list of goofs!) It has been said uncounted times in film; often by Rathbone.

The standard factoid is that “elementary my dear Watson” did not appear in the original 60 stories; which is true. However in the “Crooked Man” we find:

“Excellent!” I cried.

“Elementary,” said he.

And in the “Retired Colourman”

“Quite simple, my dear Watson.”

(“my dear Watson” occurs 80 times).

It is still a mystery how this phrase became iconic. It was not in the original extremely popular William Gillette play but is in later revisions in the 1920’s. (A similar mystery surrounds “Quick, Watson, the needle.”)

More tributes to the Ecklers will appear from time to time both in the Journal and also on the website.